1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

115 Eighty-year old Martha Page,* a small and frail woman, remembers her African grandfather and the strange "talk he use tuh make wid two udduh slabes on duh plantation."

"Wen dey git tuh gabbin, yuh couldn unnuhstan a wud dey say," Martha informed us. "Muh gran sho hab funny [226] name fuh call ting, too. He lub tuh hunt an fish an he use tuh hab a lill piece uh wood wid a string on each en tuh kill [224] squhrel an hawk wid. He call it he 'wah-hoo balik.' Some- [533] time he use tuh sing a song das staht off like dis, 'Dody boda do dandy.' He say it mean, 'We come fuh make waw tuh-day.'"

754 "Did your gran tell you about magic and conjure?" we 789 asked.

"Dat he did. I sho wuz sked ub im wen he use tuh talk bout dem ting he people in Africa could do.[15, 22a, e, 48] Some ub em could make yuh disappeah, he say, an some could fly all roun duh elements an make yuh do anyting dey wants yuh tuh do. Wen I growd up, I discobuh dat plenty uh duh tings gran tell me is sho nuff true."

"You've had personal experiences?" we queried hopefully.

"Me an muh sistuh bote. Witches use tuh ride uh regluh till it seem she gwine swivel away an die.[69] One day a man tell uh tuh tro salt on duh bed an no witch would bodduh uh. So dat ebenin muh sistuh sprinkle a heap uh salt on uh cub-buh.[69a] Soon attuh we git tuh bed, I seen a cat come [68] right in duh doe an look me in duh eye. I try tuh holluh but uh couldn make a soun. Nex ting I know sistuh wuz poin watuh in muh face.

"I dohn take tuh witches," said Martha Page. "I dohn [845] mine ghos, cuz I caahn see em as I wuzn bawn wid a caul.[4] But I dohn want no mo sperience wid witches. Das wy uh sprinkle salt down ebry night uh muh life."

The broom precaution against witches is also believed in

* *Martha Page, 606 Zubly Street.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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fish they attract to the area. One has to be careful in this venture, however, because the drums may also bring sharks.[31]

Though much sustenance is taken from the rivers, the streams, and the ocean, another food source is provided by creatures that live at the edge of the water, such as "cooters" (slider turtles), bullfrogs, terrapins, alligators, and sometimes rattlesnakes (not everyone will eat the latter because the flesh is believed to be poisonous if the snake was angered before it was killed). The flesh from the cooter is particularly pleasing to some islanders owing to its unusual taste and tender texture. The alligator is a rare delicacy, now, being no longer as readily available as it was in the past. Yet Ber Gator[32] and his swampy home continue to be lively topics in folklore and literature. Under the slave regime, according to one source, when the islanders were denied the use of guns and powder, they hunted the alligator armed only with a long hook. They entered his hole at low tide and, at considerable risk to their lives and legs, dragged the alligator out and killed him quickly. The skin was saved to sell and the flesh taken home for cooking.[33]

This dangerous method of hunting alligators is reminiscent of an even more dangerous method once used to trap the giant boa constrictors and pythons in Nigeria. One Igbo hunter explained to me that the snake hunters rubbed their bodies with a scent taken from captured boa constrictors and pythons before entering places which they were known to inhabit, in order to prevent the snake from smelling their approach. Once the quarry's hole had been located, either the hunters dragged him out with a hook or, at greater risk, one man would insert a leg into the snake's hole, allowing the snake to swallow it up to the hip. When the leg was pulled out the snake came along helplessly, unable to move with the hunter's leg in his mouth. The hunter quickly drew his knife, slit the snake's jaws and throat, and thus recovered his leg. The account of this method of hunting was corroborated by some Nigerians and called a lie by others. The hunter who told me about it, however, swore that it was indeed done. Like the alligators in the United States, the giant snakes are captured in Nigeria chiefly for their hides. The larger the snake, the more dangerous his capture is, and thus the greater the price paid for his skin will be.

The woods provide a further excellent supply of food for the Sea Islanders. Many of the more remote islands still abound with large ducks, partridges, wild turkeys, geese, and many other edible birds. Likewise, the woodlands are alive with game. Deer often roam alongside the roads in the early morning.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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side the roads in the early morning. Opossums are baked with large sweet potatoes, and raccoons are delicacies no islander will refuse. The woods are also the home of rabbits, wolves, foxes, squirrels, skunks, wildcats, and even bears, all hunted, though bears are said to be rather rare now. The islanders have generally been able to rely on a variety of wild game. One seventeenth-century explorer compiled a list:

> Deer, of which there is such infinite Herds, that the whole Country seems but one continued Park, insomuch that I have often heard Captain Matthew, an ingenious Gentleman an Agent to Sir Peter Colleton for his Affairs in Carolina, say that one hunting Indian had yearly kill'd and brought to his Plantation more than 100, sometimes 200 head of Deer. Bears there are in great numbers. . . . There are Bevors, Otters, Foxes, Raccoons, Possums, Musquasses, Hare and Coneys, Squirrels of five kinds, the flying squirrel, whose delicate skin is commended for comforting, if applied to a cold Stomach, the Red, the Grey, the Fox and Black Squirrels.[34]

The islanders, old and young, are fully acquainted with the ways of the local wild animals. Their partial dependency on these animals as a food source has caused them to pay closer attention to the animals' personalities and habits than would a hunter from another area. Thus their categorization of the animals into intelligent and not-so-intelligent ones is based on day-to-day interaction.[35]

In addition to relying on the natural environment,[36] many islanders continue an economic practice which is still the primary method of consumer exchange in the homelands of their ancestors, selling crafts and services along with their game and farm produce. Individual island families are known for "growing" carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, butchers, cabinetmakers, hairdressers, candlemakers, brickmasons, builders, farmers, ministers, and herbalists (or "rootmen"). Family members tend to follow the traditions set by preceding members of the family and handed down from generation to generation. The old skills brought from Africa or learned during slavery, when everything needed for the plantation was made or serviced by the slaves,[37] have lingered in the protected environment of the Sea Islands. Among the skills highly valued on the islands are carpentry, masonry, and the like—essential